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ABSTRACT

Summary tables compare, item by item, the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force, and the Task Force on Education for Economic Growth. These recommendations propose reforms in most or all aspects of formal education, including curriculum, academic standards, instructional practices, instructional materials, student evaluation, discipline, teacher training, personnel policies, administrative practices, funding, and relations with community, government, and business. (MCG)

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Nineteen eighty-three and eighty-four placed education at the center stage, with important potential in the economic and political arena for education in the United States

One of the reports, A Nation At Risk, is hailed as a possible "turning point" in the post-industrial age with many challenges and opportunities looming large.

Tabular summary of the three major national reports assessing American education is presented.

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University of Akron

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, March 1984.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
SELECTED EDUCATION REFORM REPORTS

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Curriculum	Significantly more time should be devoted to learning the "new basics"--English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer sciences, and for the college-bound, a foreign language. Rigorous programs should be provided to advance students' personal, educational, and occupational goals, such as the fine and performing arts and vocational education. Elementary schools should provide a sound base in English language development and writing, computational and problem-solving skills, science, social studies, foreign language and the arts. Foreign languages should be started in the elementary grades with 4-6 years of study.	The Federal Government should clearly state that the most important objective of elementary and secondary education in the United States is the development of literacy in the English language.	The school curriculum should be strengthened. States and communities should identify skills they expect the schools to impart. The academic experience should be more intense and more productive. Courses not only in mathematics and science, but also in all disciplines, must be enlivened and improved. The goal should be both richer substance and greater motivational power--elimination of "soft" non-essential courses, more enthusiastic involvement of students in learning, encouragement of mastery of skills beyond the basis, e.g., problem-solving, analysis, interpretation, and persuasive writing. Educators, business and labor leaders, and other interested parties should clearly identify the skills that the schools are expected to impart to students for effective employment and citizenship.

[1] Governmental report [2] Private study [3] State Government

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
High School Graduation Requirements	All students seeking a diploma should be required to complete (a) 4 years of English, (b) 3 years of mathematics, (c) 3 years of science, (d) 3 years of social studies, and (e) one-half year of computer science. For the college-bound, 2 years of foreign language in high school are strongly recommended.	No comparable provision	No comparable provision
Course Content	(Detailed implementing recommendations are included for each subject area.)	No comparable provision	A list of "Basic Skills and Competencies for Productive Employment" is recommended.
Proficiency in a Second Language	For the college-bound, two years of a foreign language in high school are strongly recommended.	Every American public school student should have the opportunity to acquire proficiency in a second language.	No comparable provision
Time	Significantly more time should be devoted to learning the "new basics." School districts and State legislatures should strongly consider 7-hour school days, as well as a 200- to 220-day school year. Time available for learning should be expanded through better classroom management and organization of the school day.	No comparable provision	Every state should increase the duration and intensity of academic learning time. Students should be introduced earlier to such critical subjects as science. Schools should examine each school year, especially the twelfth grade, to ensure that time is not wasted. Both States and localities should consider lengthening the school year and the school day by extending teachers' contracts.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Time (Cont'd)	Additional instructional time should be found to meet the needs of slow learners, the gifted, and others who need more instructional diversity than can be provided in the conventional school day and year.	Learning time should be increased by establishing a wider range of learning opportunities beyond the normal school day and year.	
Textbooks and Instructional Materials	Textbooks and tools of learning and teaching should be upgraded to assure more rigorous content and to reflect current applications of technology, the best scholarship, and research findings. Funds should be made available to develop texts for the disadvantaged, learning disabled, and gifted and talented.	No comparable provision	No comparable provision
Textbook Adoption	In adopting textbooks, States and localities should evaluate texts on the basis of their capacity to present rigorous and challenging material clearly and should require publishers to furnish evaluative data on effectiveness.	No comparable provision	No comparable provision
Homework	Students in high schools should be assigned homework.	No comparable provision	States and local school districts should establish firm, explicit, and demanding requirements concerning homework.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Effective Study and Work Skills	Effective study and work skills should be introduced in the early grades and continued throughout the student's schooling.	No comparable provision	No comparable provision
Programs for Special Populations	The Federal Government, in cooperation with States and localities, should help meet the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented, socio-economically disadvantaged, minority and language minority students, and the handicapped.	Federal efforts to provide special education programs for the poor and the handicapped should be continued. Federal programs for the disadvantaged and limited English speaking should be maintained.	States and school districts should increase participation of young women and minorities in courses where they are underrepresented. States and school districts should identify and challenge academically gifted students. States and school systems should specifically include handicapped children in programs for education and economic growth.
Special Fellowships for Academies	No comparable provision	Special Federal fellowships should be awarded to students to encourage the creation of small, individualized programs staffed by certified teachers and run as small-scale academies.	No comparable provision
College Entrance Requirements	Four-year college and universities should raise their admission standards in line with the recommended requirements for high school graduation.	No comparable provision	Colleges and universities should raise their entrance requirements.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Performance Standards for Students	Grades should be reliable indicators of a student's readiness for further study.	No comparable provision	States and school systems should establish requirements concerning discipline, grades, and other matters.
Standardized Tests	Standardized tests should be administered at major transition points from one level of schooling to another and particularly from high school to college or work. The purpose would be to certify credentials, identify the need for remedial work, and identify opportunities for enrichment.	No comparable provision	Effective programs should be established to monitor student progress through periodic testing of general achievement and specific skills. The testing program should be linked to a carefully designed program of remediation and enrichment for students who need special help.
Student Progress	Placement and grouping of students, as well as promotion and graduation policies, should be guided by the academic progress of students and their instructional needs, rather than by rigid adherence to age.	No comparable provision	Student progress should be measured by tests of general achievement and specific skills with promotion based on mastery, not age. States and local districts should establish firm, explicit, and demanding requirements concerning student grades.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Student Absences and Failures	Attendance policies with clear incentives and sanctions should be used to reduce the amount of time lost through student absenteeism and tardiness.	No comparable provision	States, school systems, principals, teachers, and parents should work to reduce student absences and school failures. Efforts to deal with absenteeism and dropouts should include revitalizing course materials and making educational schedules flexible enough to accommodate students with special problems.
Discipline	The burden on teachers to maintain discipline should be reduced by developing and enforcing firm and fair conduct codes, and by considering alternative rooms, programs, and schools for disruptive students.	No comparable provision	States and local school districts should establish firm, explicit, and demanding requirements concerning student discipline.
Teachers	Teacher preparation should be improved, and teaching should be made a more rewarding profession.	A major Federal initiative should be undertaken that emphasizes the critical importance of quality teachers in America's schools.	States and school districts should improve methods for recruiting, training, and paying teachers.
Teacher Preparation	Persons preparing to teach should be required to meet high educational standards, and to demonstrate competence in academic discipline.	No comparable provision	Every State and local school district, with the fullest participation of teachers, should drastically improve methods of training teachers.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Teacher Preparation (Cont'd)	Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs.		States, single or in cooperation with one another, should establish better pre-service and in-service education programs for teachers.
	Resources should be used to solve the problem of a shortage of mathematics and science teachers.		
Teacher Certification	Efforts should be made to have qualified persons with academic training in mathematics and science eligible to teach. Other areas of critical need, such as English, must also be addressed.	No comparable provision	Teacher certification processes should be changed to make it possible for qualified "outsiders" to serve in the schools.
Master Teachers	School boards, administrators, and teachers should cooperate to develop career ladders for teachers that distinguish among the beginning instructor, the experienced teacher, and the master teachers.	A national Master Teacher Program should be established, funded by the Federal Government, that recognizes and rewards teaching excellence.	States should create career ladders for teachers
Teacher Education Institutions	Colleges and universities should be judged on the performance of their graduates.	No comparable provision	Each State should substantially restructure and renew its teacher training curriculum, and should upgrade the academic quality of the teacher training curriculum so that entering teachers will meet higher standards.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Teacher Salaries or Grants	Teacher salaries should be increased and made professionally competitive and market sensitive. School boards should adopt an 11-month contract for teachers. Teacher salaries should be performance-based.	Master teachers would be awarded a grant of $40,000 per year for a period of 5 years. An incentive approach should be adopted to provide awards to teachers of exceptional merit; awards should be numerous enough to attract national attention and substantial enough to keep the master teachers in the classroom.	Every State and local school district, with the fullest participation of teachers, should drastically improve methods for paying teachers. Financial incentives for teachers should be keyed to differing responsibilities and to filling critical needs in certain subject areas.
Teacher Performance	Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers may be rewarded, average ones may be encouraged, and poor ones may be either improved or terminated. Master teachers should be involved in supervising teachers during their probationary years.	The master teacher proposal is designed to "pave the way for reconsideration of merit based personnel systems."	Boards of Education and higher education officials should cooperate with teachers and administrators on ways to measure the effectiveness of teachers and reward outstanding performances. Procedures should be tightened for deciding which teachers to retain and dismiss.
Recognition of Teachers	No comparable provision	No comparable provision	States, communities, the media and businesses should devise new ways to honor teachers.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Loans/Grants for Prospective Teachers	Incentives, such as grants and loans, should be made available to attract outstanding students into the teaching profession.	A scholarship program should be used to augment the supply of teachers in mathematics and science as well as in foreign languages.	Scholarships and other financial incentives should be used to attract the most able people into teaching.
Leadership and Management	Citizens across the nation should hold educators and elected officials responsible for providing the leadership necessary to achieve these reforms.	The executive and legislative branches of the Federal Government should emphasize the need for better schools and a better education for all young Americans.	Schools should use effective management techniques.
Principals	Principals and superintendents must play a crucial role in developing school and community support for reforms. Administrative burdens and related intrusions on the teacher should be reduced to add to the time available for teaching and learning.	No comparable provision	Principals should be in charge of educational programs. Pay should be related to responsibilities and effectiveness. States should set higher standards for recruiting, training, and monitoring the performance of principals.
School Boards	School boards must consciously develop leadership skills at the school and district levels if the reforms are to be achieved.	No comparable provision	No comparable provision

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Educators, Parents, and Citizens	The Commission calls upon educators, parents, and citizens at all levels to assist in bringing about the reforms proposed in this report.	No comparable provision	No comparable provision
Fiscal Support	Citizens should provide the fiscal support and stability required to bring about the reforms.	The Federal Government must continue to help meet the special needs of poor and minority students while taking the lead in meeting the general and overwhelming need for educational quality.	Schools should make the best possible use of resources. More funds are needed from all sources for selective investments in efforts that promote quality.
Federal Government	"Programs for Special Populations" is recommended.	Categorical programs required by the Federal Government should be funded through the Federal Treasury. The Federal Government should fund the Master Teachers Program. The Federal Government has a responsibility to help overcome the unevenness of State efforts to fund education.	The Federal Government has an essential supporting role in financing education.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Federal Government (Cont'd)		School districts with substantial numbers of immigrant children should receive Federal Impact Aid. Federal funds now used for bilingual education should be used to teach non-English speaking children how to speak, read, and write English.	
States and Localities	State and local school officials, including school board members, governors, and legislators have the primary responsibility for financing and governing schools and incorporating these reforms into educational policies and fiscal planning.	No comparable provision	States and localities have the chief responsibility for supporting the schools and making educational policy. States should continue efforts to secure more equitable distribution of educational resources. More human, financial, and institutional resources should be invested in education.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Federal Role	The Federal Government's role includes several functions of national consequence that States and localities are unlikely to be able to meet; protecting the constitutional and civil rights of students and personnel; collecting data, statistics, and general information about education; supporting teacher training in these areas of shortage or key national needs; and providing student financial assistance and research and graduate training. Assistance should be provided with a minimum of administrative burden and intrusiveness. The Federal Government has the primary responsibility to identify the national interest in education and also to help fund and support efforts to protect and promote that interest.	The executive and legislative branches of the Federal Government are called upon to emphasize the need for better schools and a better education for young Americans. The Federal Government should promote and support proficiency in English for all children in the public schools, but especially for those who do not speak English, or have only a limited command of English. Federal attention and assistance should go to economically depressed localities with concentrations of immigrant and/or impoverished groups as well as those that are already making strong efforts to improve their educational performance. The Federal Government should emphasize programs to develop basic scientific literacy among all citizens and programs to provide advanced training in mathematics and science for secondary school students. (Also, see "Teachers" above.)	(See "Federal Government" under "Fiscal Support" above.)

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Federal Research Efforts	(See "Federal Role" above.)	Federal support should be provided for specific research activities such as basic data, educational performances, evaluation of federal education programs, and fundamental research into learning processes.	No comparable provision
Implementation Plan	(See "Leadership and Management.")	No comparable provision	Each State should develop and implement a plan for improving education in grades K-12. Each governor should appoint a broadly inclusive task force on education for economic growth. This task force should develop an implementation plan for the State. Each local school district also should develop its own implementation plan.
Business/ Education Partnerships	No comparable provision	No comparable provision	Partnerships for improving education should be formed with participation by businesses, labor, and the professions. Public officials, higher education officials, and school officials should establish their own partnerships.

	The National Commission on Excellence in Education[1]	Twentieth Century Fund Task Force[2]	Task Force on Education for Economic Growth[3]
Sponsor	Secretary of Education and the Department of Education.	Twentieth Century Fund, an independent research foundation which undertakes policy studies of economic, political, and social institutions and issues.	Education Commission of the States with financial support from corporations, philanthropic foundations, and organizations.
Membership	Eighteen members, with 6 from higher education and 4 from elementary and secondary education.	Twelve members, with 10 from higher education.	Forty-one members, including 14 business leaders and 13 governors.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Professor Abdul Amir Al-Rubaiy is Associate Professor of Educational Foundations at The University of Akron, and currently is the General Secretary of the Comparative and International Education Society of the United States.